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EXTRACTING THE BEATEN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE:  
THE MARGIN BETWEEN DEFEAT AND  
CATASTROPHE

A Monograph  
by

Major Michael D. Burke  
Infantry

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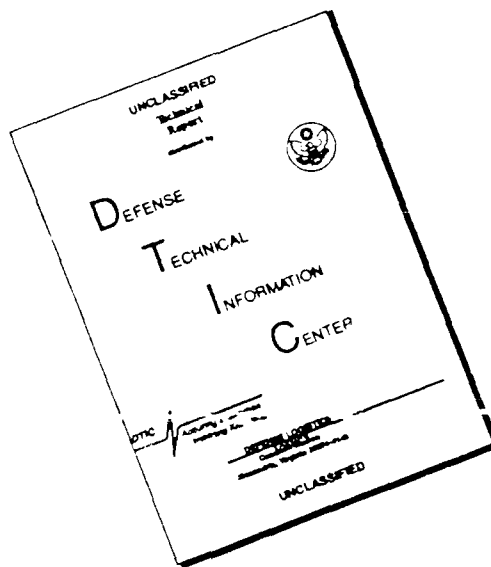
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Following the historical section, the paper synthesizes some of the salient characteristics of the various operations into three major operational points. They are 1) the necessity of making a timely evacuation decision, 2) the need to synchronize components for the evacuation, and 3) the reversal of the defender's advantage as discussed by Clausewitz.

The paper concludes by examining implications for future planners of large scale combat evacuations. It considers the effects of modern weapons, air transport, and the evolution of power projection. The minimum requirement to examine evacuation requirements within a theater is emphasized.

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THE MARGIN BETWEEN DEFEAT AND CATASTROPHE

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18 May 1989

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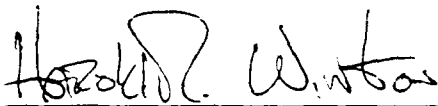
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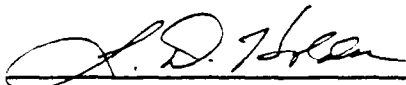
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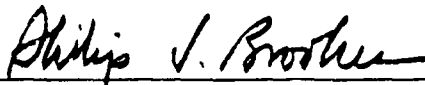
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### ABSTRACT

**EXTRACTING THE BEATEN EXPEDITIONARY FORCE: THE MARGIN BETWEEN DEFEAT AND CATASTROPHE**, by Major Michael D. Burke. U.S. Army. 41 pages. plus maps and notes.

This paper examines theater evacuations conducted over significant bodies of water. Extricating any defeated force is difficult; withdrawing the force across a major water body is the special challenge of maritime powers with distant commitments, such as the United States. The monograph focuses on combat force evacuation and does not discuss Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO), a separate and important component of many of today's war plans.

This paper is structured around five withdrawals arranged chronologically. They are: 1) Dunkirk, 2) Norway, 3) Greece and Crete, 4) Guadalcanal, and 5) Hungnam, Korea. These five were selected because air power affected them, and because they illustrate a range of differing theater circumstances. Each operation is examined for its salient features, and the major lessons from each are identified. Other retreats conducted by the Germans from the Crimea and Sicily in 1943 or the Nationalist Chinese in 1949 are omitted for brevity.

Following the historical section, the paper synthesizes some of the salient characteristics of the various operations into three major operational points. They are 1) the necessity of making a timely evacuation decision, 2) the need to synchronize components for the evacuation, and 3) the reversal of the defender's advantage as discussed by Clausewitz.

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## PART I -- INTRODUCTION:

Clausewitz wrote in On War:

"When a battle is lost, the strength of an army is broken--its moral even more than its physical strength. A second battle without the help of new and favorable factors would mean outright defeat, perhaps absolute destruction. That is a military axiom. It is the nature of things that a retreat should be continued until the balance of power is reestablished..."

Clausewitz did not have to cross oceans to confront the enemies of 19th century Prussia: the United States must. Because of its position, the United States must project military force over great distances by means of sea and air power. Recognizing this, U.S. forces, over time, evolved unique power projection capabilities. Likewise, command arrangements have changed over the years to meet distant commitments.

"To ensure unity of strategic and operational direction, the world has been divided into five unified commands (theaters of war). A theater of war is a geographical area within which land, sea, and air operations are directed toward a common strategic aim. Typically, but not invariably, operations within a single theater of war are directed against a single adversary or coalition of adversaries."

The U.S. projects ground combat power through joint expeditionary forces. Marine and Army forces, separately or in combination, provide the decisive elements for conducting overseas campaigns. Normally, these ground forces enjoy the support of powerful U.S. naval and air forces. Since the end of World War Two, the United States has dispatched (and in some cases, maintained) substantial ground forces to Europe, Korea, Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Lebanon. It has also considered intervention in several other areas.

Operations involving the projection of military power by expeditionary forces are routinely wargamed. All of the unified commands have contingency plans prepared for use in an American intervention in their respective areas. Forces are assigned or designated for employment by each of the Unified Commanders. Exercises ranging from computer wargames to the actual deployment of thousands of troops refine these war plans at every level.

In contrast, the defeat of an expeditionary force is rarely wargamed. Great effort is put into planning for the deployment and employment of expeditionary forces, but far less work is devoted to the study of how to retrieve these forces if they are defeated. Military commanders do not plan to lose. Nonetheless, history demonstrates that forces projected overseas have been defeated. This paper examines retreat on an operational scale: the retrograde of an expeditionary force across a major water body and out of the theater of operations.

The U.S. Army has been involved in two major withdrawal operations: the extraction of the Army of the Potomac from the Peninsula in 1862 and the withdrawal of X Corps from North Korea in 1950. McClellan's spring campaign of 1862 came to grief during the Seven Days Battle, and 100,000 Union troops were pinned against the James River. The Navy extracted the Army and brought it up the Potomac River too late to prevent defeat at Second Bull Run but in time to meet General Lee at Antietam. Had the Confederates been able to keep McClellan on the Peninsula while Lee exploited his

victory at Second Manassas, the course of the American Civil War might have been different. Likewise, the removal of X Corps from Hungnam in North Korea and its subsequent insertion into Eighth Army's defensive zone allowed the United Nations to form a stable defense across Korea.

Other nations have conducted major withdrawal operations in this century. The British have withdrawn defeated forces several times, including operations in Gallipoli in World War I, as well as withdrawals from Belgium, Norway and Greece in World War II. The Japanese withdrew forces under extraordinarily difficult circumstances from Guadalcanal and from the Aleutian Islands. This paper will look at several of these withdrawal operations.

There have also been striking examples of expeditionary forces suffering defeat and destruction, when their retrieval was possible and sensible. In 1943, almost 240,000 German and Italian troops of *Fanzer Armee Afrika*, trapped in Tunisia, surrendered to Allied forces. Hitler refused to consider evacuation despite the urging of his generals.<sup>2</sup> The failure to evacuate Axis forces trapped in North Africa led within months to an Italian armistice and the diversion of crucial German forces from the East to secure Italy.

The specter of thousands American prisoners held by regimes of questionable humanitarian concerns is sobering. One may recall the privations of the Americans held prisoner in Southeast Asia and the resultant political price paid at the conference table in Paris to obtain their release. Imagine then the political leverage that the imprisonment of

50,000 Americans might exert. Even in the recent conflict between Iran and Iraq, nations not noted for their compassion, the issue of prisoner repatriation was (and is) a significant one.

Are there any lessons to be learned by looking at historical evacuations? While the means have changed somewhat in the last forty years, one may argue that the principles have not changed greatly. Technology has provided the evacuation planner with new tools and new challenges. The same moral and organizational problems confronting the British at Dunkirk will be faced by a future operational commander attempting escape. By examining several of these operations, one may determine both old and new considerations that the operational planners of future expeditionary forces may use in considering unpalatable but necessary sequels to their plans.

There are several limitations to this paper. To begin with, the paper concentrates on theater evacuations conducted over significant bodies of water. Extricating any defeated force is difficult; withdrawing the force across a major water body is the special challenge of maritime powers with distant commitments, such as the United States. Second, the reasons why each of the forces were defeated will only be touched upon. Third, each of the evacuations will only be surveyed for its major characteristics. Extensive description will be omitted for the sake of brevity. Fourth, the paper focuses on combat force evacuation and does not discuss Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO), a separate

and extremely important component of many of today's war plans.

This paper is structured around five withdrawals arranged chronologically. They include: 1) Dunkirk, 2) Norway, 3) Greece and Crete, 4) Guadalcanal, and 5) Hungnam. These five were selected because air power affected them and because they represent a variety of circumstances. Retreats conducted by the Germans from the Crimea and Sicily in 1943 or the Nationalist Chinese in 1949 were omitted for brevity.

Each operation will be examined for its salient features, and the major lessons identified. Following the historical section, the paper synthesizes some of the salient characteristics of the various operations into three major operational points. The paper concludes by examining implications for future planners of large scale combat evacuations.

## PART II -- HISTORICAL EXAMPLES

### DUNKIRK

The evacuation of nearly 350,000 French and British troops from the Channel Coast in May and June of 1940 represents one of the great feats of arms in military history. It is arguably the largest combat evacuation ever conducted. Numerous books and documentaries have appeared on the subject. One need only say the word "Dunkirk" and images of long lines of British troops waiting along sandy beaches to be picked up and taken to safety come to mind.

In the Spring of 1940, the British Expeditionary Force (BEF), along with the First and Seventh French Armies and the

Belgian Army, comprised the I Army Group. This Army Group, nominally under the command of French General Blanchard,<sup>4</sup> was trapped in May of 1940 between German Army Group A, striking through the Ardennes in the south, and Army Group B, advancing through Belgium and Holland to the east and north. The British and French forces attempted to break out to the south, but these attacks were thwarted by confusion, exhaustion, and German retention of the initiative. The rapid collapse of Dutch resistance, followed by the Belgian defeat and armistice, compelled General Blanchard to order a retreat to the Channel coast and ended any consideration by the British of continuing operations in Flanders. The British decided to evacuate with or without the French.

On 26 May, the British Admiralty commenced "Operation DYNAMO", the evacuation of the BEF from the Continent. Admiral Bertram Ramsey assumed overall direction of the effort from his headquarters at Dover. Even prior to the establishment of an evacuation headquarters, the Royal Navy removed 28,000 soldiers from the Dunkirk area.<sup>5</sup>

Although reluctant to fall back to the sea with the British, the lack of any clear alternative compelled French commanders to follow suit. It was already too late for some French forces. The Germans surrounded major elements of First French Army at Lille. British troops defending Calais were likewise cut off.

Once they decided to evacuate, each of the commanders faced enormous challenges. The first challenge was the combined nature of the campaign, or at least what was left of

it. The operational aims of the evacuation, even after the French agreed, remained essentially divergent. Despite policy statements to the contrary, the British operational objective was the evacuation of as much of the BEF as possible to Britain, and once there to devise a new campaign. The French ends remain somewhat harder to discern. General Weygand, French Commander in Chief, wanted to maintain an Allied beachhead in Belgium. Other French Generals vacillated between fighting to a glorious extinction and evacuating to continue resistance.<sup>7</sup> Once British intentions were clear, the French planned to withdraw as many troops as possible from commitment to the defensive campaign in France. In any case, by May 26, 1940, the situation seemed so grave that British planners estimated that the retrieval of even 45,000 troops would be a significant achievement.<sup>8</sup>

The British air component commander, Marshal Dowding, was confronted with the triple problem of denying the *Luftwaffe* free access to the evacuation area, extracting remaining Royal Air Force (RAF) units from the continent, and preserving forces for the air war over England. He achieved some balance of forces by committing two fighter groups from bases in England, including several squadrons of the new Spitfire. In addition, he directed some medium bombers to conduct interdiction missions against German forces. However, 25 squadrons of fighters remained in England during the evacuation at Dunkirk.<sup>9</sup>

The naval component commander, Admiral Ramsey, had to bring together all the evacuation assets as well as

coordinate the disparate elements of the Royal Navy, Air Force, and the trapped expeditionary force. Ramsey assembled an improvised staff to carry out all of this on an extremely short schedule. At the same time, the Germans began attacking channel shipping, using fast attack boats and submarines based in occupied Holland. The lack of prior coordination between the Royal Navy and French Navy also complicated evacuation operations.

The ground commanders had to deal with the most serious problems. Confusion and exhaustion prevailed in the BEF and French forces. German mobile forces assaulted the Allies' right flank and right rear. The defeat and sudden capitulation of Belgium uncovered the left flank. Complete encirclement was only avoided through the French First Army's defensive efforts at Lille and the rapid shift of Montgomery's 3rd Division down the entire length of the British line to fill in the left.<sup>10</sup>

By May 28th, the situation had stabilized. As part of the decision to evacuate, the BEF commander, Lord Gort, ordered his engineers to survey and establish a defensive perimeter protecting the port of Dunkirk. Simultaneously, the Germans halted their mobile forces from May 24th until May 27th. This halt allowed the retreating British and French the time they needed to occupy the perimeter. The Allied defensive line was well chosen: it combined the numerous canals and villages into a system of strongpoints and obstacles which essentially brought German mobile operations to a halt. By May 29th, German Panzer forces



withdrew to refit and prepare for the destruction of the remainder of the French Army.<sup>11</sup>

There was no unified ground commander until 31 May, when the Allies appointed French Admiral Abriel, commander of the fortress at Dunkirk, to take charge of all forces inside the perimeter. His role was minimal.<sup>12</sup> The British and French coordinated operations, but did not closely integrate them.

Withdrawal operations using vessels of all types were underway by 27 May. Initially, the primary means of evacuation was ferrying by small boat out to warships and transports waiting off the beaches. This was very slow: up to 12 hours were required to load a destroyer with 600 troops. The lack of progress prompted Admiral Ramsey to establish a shore-control party headed by Royal Navy Captain W. G. Tennant to speed operations. Tennant shifted the main withdrawal effort to the harbor mole while continuing small boat evacuations from the beach. The difference was dramatic--a destroyer could load 600 troops from the mole in 20 minutes. Improvised moles were then created by driving trucks in long lines far into the water at low tide, allowing troops to reach larger vessels without ferrying.<sup>13</sup>

The German *Eighteenth Army*, under the command of General Georg von Kuechler, had the mission of destroying the trapped Allies.<sup>14</sup> Despite increasing German ground and air pressure, British and French troops on the perimeter continued to hold, although not without occasional drastic measures on the part of British elite units and senior officers. Throughout the operation, units of the Guards were used to stiffen defenses.

and where necessary, restore discipline.<sup>15</sup>

Between 27 May and 5 June, the British, with assistance from the French Navy, evacuated some 335,000 personnel from the vicinity of Dunkirk. The daily totals were prodigious. On 30 May, warships and transports loaded 58,823 troops in 24 hours. On June 1st, the largest single day, the rescue fleet loaded 64,429 soldiers.<sup>16</sup> The Allies paid a heavy price for the achievement. On June 1st, the *Luftwaffe* sank or wrecked 17 ships. Operation DYNAMO cost the French and British a total of 243 out of roughly 900 vessels utilized, or 27%. On land, the BEF lost or abandoned 2,472 guns and 63,879 vehicles, a substantial portion within the beachhead. The Germans captured approximately 40,000 troops, mostly French, after they provided the final defense for Dunkirk.<sup>17</sup>

The relative success of the operation stemmed from several crucial factors:

1) Terrain-- The canals and villages in the Dunkirk area formed an excellent defensive position. The dispatch of engineers and staff to plan a defensive line and to vector units into position as they came into the perimeter around Dunkirk was critical in halting the retreat and buying time for the evacuation.

2) German halt and shift of main effort-- The Germans halted the attack of General Guderian's *XIX Korps* against the Allied pocket from 24 until 27 May. They then shifted the operational main effort beginning May 29th to the execution of Operation *FALL RUT*, the destruction of France. Historians ever since have questioned these decisions, but at the time

they were made, German armored strength had fallen to 50%; and senior German commanders such as General Gerd von Rundstedt were growing increasingly nervous about the over-extension of their forces.

3) Weather-- The weather was almost perfect for an evacuation. Fog and poor weather inland kept *Luftwaffe* sortie rates down for much of the operation, while English bases were largely clear. The Channel was extraordinarily calm. (One may contrast conditions with Normandy exactly four years later.) The calm seas allowed small boat operations that otherwise would have been impossible.

4) The German Air Force-- The German Air Force concentrated its efforts against the embarkation port (Dunkirk) and left the debarkation point (Dover) unmolested. This probably stemmed from a difference of operational focus, but the ability to debark forces without hindrance doubled the turn-around rate for the ships involved, particularly the destroyers. In addition, German fighters did not strafe embarking troops since the presence of the RAF forced them to escort German bombers.

5) The Royal Navy-- The Royal Navy provided control and organization for the evacuation and marshalled the required forces. In addition, the Royal Navy risked critical operational resources, i.e. modern destroyers, to accomplish the withdrawal. Because of the relatively short distance to England, a destroyer steaming at 30 knots could make four trips per day to the evacuation area. So severe were destroyer losses that Admiral Pound, Commander In Chief (CIC)

Home Fleet, withdrew his modern destroyers to prevent further loss. However, the Combined Imperial General Staff overturned his decision at the desperate urging of Admiral Ramsey; and the destroyers returned to evacuation duty.<sup>12</sup>

6) Royal Air Force-- The Royal Air Force, although not able to achieve air superiority, at least maintained air parity throughout the evacuation. While ship losses were frightful, they would have been unacceptable had the *Luftwaffe* been unhindered.

7) Command and control-- Although improvised, command arrangements proved effective. Admiral Ramsey, in Dover, coordinated and directed the overall effort. Captain Tennant coordinated embarkation efforts from the shore. Rear Admiral Wake-Walker was appointed to take charge of afloat embarkation and shipping operations in the vicinity of Dunkirk. The armies divided staffs for conduct of the perimeter defense and the supervision of unit movements to the embarkation points. Lord Gort appointed General Alexander as commander of all British ground forces after Churchill ordered the BEF commander to return to England to preclude his capture. Alexander handled the defense of the perimeter and the staging of troops to the sea superbly.

There were also three morale factors worth noting:

1) Reappearance of the RAF-- Until the end of May, British and French troops suffered constant air attacks which totally disrupted command and control and harried them to exhaustion. However, the commitment of fresh RAF groups to the fight on the Channel sent spirits soaring and contributed

to halting what had been a rout. In particular, air strikes carried out against German troops had a moral effect on the British all out of proportion to their tactical effectiveness.<sup>19</sup>

2) The presence of several Guards regiments acted as a moral tonic to the other troops. One observer said that the only disciplined soldiers left when they reached Dunkirk were the Guards, all others were "rabble". In some cases, Guard units were placed behind other British troops in the perimeter and halted routed troops by shooting them. In addition, Guards troops of the Grenadiers and Coldstreams repulsed attack after attack on key villages, buying days of time for the evacuation.<sup>20</sup>

3) The faith of the British soldier in the Royal Navy was the over-riding moral factor at Dunkirk. Survivors recalled numerous instances of mob behavior being quieted by the mere appearance of British sailors.<sup>21</sup> The sight of Royal Navy warships day after day off of the beaches restored the confidence of the soldiers in their own leaders as well, and allowed the troops to focus their energy toward definite missions and goals. It is interesting to note that the Royal Navy provided little gunfire support, other than anti-aircraft fire, due to the nature of the coast line and the commitment of the heavy warships to the Norwegian operation.

In terms of command and control, the leadership within the perimeter had to overcome the "we've done enough, now its your turn" mentality of the beaten force. There appears to have been a shift in operational leadership from the Army to

the Navy. The moral impetus to continue the fight was provided by the Navy, the armies being concerned only with escaping. It is a credit to Army officers of energy and unshakable moral courage such as Montgomery and Alexander that operations proceeded despite lethargy and doubt.

#### NORWAY

The dispatch of an Anglo-French expeditionary force to central and northern Norway led to an evacuation of forces simultaneously with Dunkirk. The Germans invaded Norway on April 9, 1940 in a daring series of naval assaults and air landing operations which seized or neutralized almost all the key locations in Southern and Central Norway. The Germans committed virtually their entire Navy and substantial air and ground elements (X *Fliegerkorps* and XXI *Korps*, respectively) to the operation.

The Allies had been planning an intervention into neutral Norway of their own, but the Germans struck first.<sup>22</sup> However, forces were hastily assembled and committed to Namsos and Andalsnes in central Norway (146th and 148th British Infantry Brigades respectively). A much larger Allied force of 24,000 sailed to Narvik in the north.<sup>23</sup>

The Royal Navy established sea control in a series of engagements with the much smaller German fleet. As a result, the Allied landings at Namsos, Andalsnes, and Narvik were virtually unopposed. Meanwhile, the Germans focused their ground efforts on Trondheim, which they believed was the decisive point along the Norwegian littoral. The Allies made only tentative efforts to reach Trondheim from Namsos. With

Trondheim secured, the German Army was able to link up with forces advancing from Oslo and turn north to attack the Allies.

On land, the inexperienced Allies were no match for German parachute and mountain troops backed by the *Luftwaffe*. The Allies at Namos were woefully short of anti-aircraft weapons and were rapidly disorganized by heavy air attacks. Although a number of obsolescent Gladiator fighters were landed at Namos, these were overwhelmed by the superior *Luftwaffe*. By April 26th, the Germans eliminated the RAF from central Norway.<sup>24</sup>

The loss of shore-based aircraft, the inability of the Royal Navy to provide effective air support, and the approach of superior German ground elements forced the evacuation of central Norway. On 28 April, the Allied commanders decided to withdraw from Namos and Adalsnes and continue operations in northern Norway at Narvik. A force of light cruisers, destroyers, and military transports successfully re-embarked the two brigades comprising the landing force. Because of the rugged terrain, the Germans were unable to bring sufficient ground troops up in time to halt the evacuation. Fortunately for the Allies, the *Luftwaffe* couldn't sustain attacks against the port for a variety of reasons. Despite this, several British warships were heavily damaged and two were sunk.<sup>25</sup> Retreating forces destroyed a substantial amount of equipment to prevent its capture.

The German breakthrough in France dashed British hopes of maintaining a foothold in Norway at Narvik. Realizing that

there was no possibility of sustaining the expeditionary force. Churchill ordered it to be withdrawn at the end of May.

Lord Cork, the expeditionary force commander at Narvik, had more air support than the forces at Nasmos. Hurricane fighters landed east of Narvik and were able to keep the Luftwaffe from dominating the airspace over the Allied elements. Ground forces fell back to Narvik and the evacuation commenced during the first week of June. Fifteen transports, ten destroyers and three anti-aircraft cruisers, plus auxiliaries, carried out the evacuation, supported by two carriers and other major units of the Home Fleet.

The critical days of the evacuation were the 7th and 8th of June, with the King Haakon of Norway embarked on the 7th.<sup>2\*</sup> The troops moved to pre-selected embarkation points around the fjord where small boats ferried them out to the waiting transports and warships. All personnel were successfully embarked and major demolitions carried out against the port. In a remarkable feat of airmanship, RAF pilots landed their aircraft safely aboard the carrier *Glorious*, despite their lack of shipboard training. The expeditionary force completed loading on 10 June, but the danger to the expeditionary force was not past.

With a sense of daring typical of the Germans in 1940, the battle cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* evaded the warships of the Home Fleet and proceeded north to disrupt the evacuation from Narvik. Fortunately for the expeditionary force, but tragically for the Royal Navy, they encountered



the carrier *Glorious* returning with her deck jammed with expeditionary force aircraft. The Germans rapidly sank the carrier and her two escorting destroyers, but not before the destroyer H.M.S. *Acasta* put a torpedo into *Scharnhorst*, forcing the Germans to return to Norway. Had her torpedo attack been unsuccessful, it is likely that the German warships would have round the lightly escorted transports and destroyed them.<sup>27</sup>

There were two noteworthy factors in the Narvik evacuation:

- 1) Unlike Dunkirk, the British planned the Norwegian evacuation operations before the Germans compelled the ground forces to retreat. Particularly at Narvik, the early decision to evacuate was critical, because it precluded a concentration of sufficient German airpower to overwhelm the supporting Allied air elements. Allied withdrawal operations were therefore orderly. Clearly the early evacuation decision prevented the exhaustion of soldiers that marked the retreat to Dunkirk. Because the troops were fresh, they conducted effective delaying operations and forced the advancing German to keep their distance.

- 2) The other lesson that the Narvik operation demonstrated was the relative nature of sea power. Smaller German naval forces very nearly destroyed the retreating expeditionary force at sea despite Royal Navy superiority in the theater of operations. One may conclude that enemy forces attempting to block a sea-borne evacuation have an effect out of proportion to their size, particularly given

the confusion and friction inherent in an operational retrograde.

### GREECE AND CRETE

Another nearly forgotten episode of WW II is "Operation LUSTRE", the British effort to aid Greece in 1941. The British subsequently evacuated the Greek peninsula and Crete against formidable opposition, and with little air support.

The success of the desert operations against the Italians in early 1941 temporarily eased mounting threats to the Suez Canal. Combined with the unexpected Greek victory against Mussolini's troops on the Albanian Front in the late fall of 1940, the British, at Churchill's urging, reinforced the Greeks against the growing German threat in the Balkans. Quite correctly, as it turned out, the British judged the Greeks incapable of defending their frontiers against the Italians and a German invasion from the Balkans.

On 11 February 1941, the Imperial General Staff ordered Field Marshal Wavell, Mediterranean Theater Commander, to dispatch troops and aircraft to Greece. The expeditionary force consisted of 58,000 troops, along with what meager air support could be spared. Total air support for the expeditionary force consisted of 40 Gladiator fighters, 71 Blenheim bombers, 12 other medium-light bombers, and 24 Lysander support aircraft.<sup>28</sup> The troops sent to Greece were British, New Zealand and Australian elements in roughly equal numbers. Some tanks, mostly unreliable Cruiser Mk. I vehicles, were also sent to Greece. The force commander was General "Bumbo" Maitland Wilson.

Following their invasion of Yugoslavia, the Germans attacked Greece from both Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. The Germans, with armor and heavy air support, enveloped the British and Greek initial defensive lines and forced the Allies to conduct a series of delaying actions. The terrain compelled the Greeks and British to diverge, further complicating the defense. The air support available to General Wilson was eliminated in air battles or destroyed on the ground by German air strikes. What tanks the British possessed were largely abandoned due to mechanical defects.<sup>28</sup>

Field Marshal Wavell conferred with senior component commanders on April 15th, and concluded that evacuation from Greece was a necessity. A section of the theater planning staff, under the direction of Rear Admiral H.T. Billie-Graham, moved from Cairo to Athens and began planning the evacuation. This planning was facilitated by the existence of preliminary estimates prepared in March by some far-seeing (and pessimistic) naval planners.<sup>29</sup> On the 19th of April, Wavell and Wilson conferred in Athens. Both agreed that the evacuation must proceed before the spring brought better flying weather for the Germans; both men were also cognizant of the serious political consequences of yet another evacuation. They agreed upon April 28th as the start day of the evacuation.<sup>30</sup>

The initial staff estimates projected that only 30% of the troops could be evacuated, due to the heavy damage already inflicted to the Greek ports, particularly Piraeus, by German air attack. As a result of this damage, the

British planned to evacuate over open beaches. Like Narvik, the distances involved were large. From Athens to Cairo was over 600 miles. The journey to Crete from Athens was nearly 150 miles. Rapidly growing German air strength in the Aegean Sea, together with the threat of attack by the Italian fleet, made the voyage from the beaches as hazardous as the evacuation itself.

British troops reorganized for the delay and evacuation, and commenced withdrawal to their embarkation points. Terrain scattered British forces as much as the enemy. Aided by the rugged terrain and well executed obstacles, the British reached their evacuation areas despite German pursuit and parachute operations. On 21 April, the Greeks began to surrender, with the final Greek surrender concluded at Salonika on 23 April. The British command moved the evacuation date, originally set for the 28th, up to the 14th as a result of the Greek surrender. On 22 April Wilson's staff issued the detailed evacuation orders. The plan called for British and Commonwealth troops to be evacuated from two beaches in Attica and three beaches in the Peloponnesos. On 23 April, the RAF destroyed the remaining British aircraft on the ground at Argos to prevent their capture.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the difficulties of open beach evacuation, the operation proceeded well until April 27, when the Luftwaffe intervened in force. On that day Ju-87 Stukas sank two destroyers with a huge loss of life (over 500) and damaged several other vessels. Even more than Dunkirk, the fast warships of the Navy were critical to the extraction efforts.

The long distances travelled in dangerous waters demanded high speed to minimize the exposure to enemy air and naval attack. Each destroyer or cruiser loss had major impact on the evacuation. In addition to direct attacks, the Germans also used aerial mines effectively.<sup>33</sup>

Worse followed. Nearly 10,000 troops awaited evacuation near the town of Kalamata. On the evening of April 28th the Royal Navy moved in to evacuate them. German motorized infantry attacked the town's defenses and succeeded in breaking into the perimeter. Bayonet charges finally halted the Germans. Meanwhile, word reached the evacuation flotilla that the Italian Battle Fleet had sortied, and the Navy aborted the evacuation. Only 400 of the 10,000 trapped soldiers had been embarked when the ships departed. The remainder attempted to exfiltrate or surrendered on April 29th.

The Royal Navy retrieved a grand total of 42,311 troops out of the original 58,051 man expeditionary force. Less than 1,000 of the 15,740 losses were caused in battle. The remainder surrendered. The British also lost nearly 800 tanks and artillery pieces.<sup>34</sup>

Approximately 20,000 of the 42,000 troops taken off the Greek mainland were shipped to Crete to reinforce the garrison of 5,200 already defending the island. They arrived with little equipment except their small arms. Including additional reinforcements from Egypt, total British strength on Crete as of May 20th, 1941, was 28,614.<sup>35</sup> The British operational aim was to maintain a foothold in the Eastern

Mediterranean and develop Crete into a fleet and air base.

Having completed the occupation of mainland Greece and selected islands in the Aegean, the Germans pursued the British into Crete. On May 19th, 1941, the Germans commenced "Operation MERCURY", the airborne assault on Crete, utilizing troops of the 7th Parachute Division and 5th and 6th Mountain Divisions, supported by *Luftflotte 4*. The Germans ran into a hornet's nest and were nearly defeated by the 1st New Zealand Division's counterattack on 22 May. Only the complete air superiority maintained by the *Luftwaffe* prevented the destruction of the airborne force. Despite the air support, the Germans lost 56 percent of the parachute force.<sup>20</sup>

The retention of Maleme airfield by German paratroopers precipitated another Allied evacuation. Air-landed German reinforcements continued to arrive. Faced with growing German ground strength, and unable to determine the seriousness of the German situation, General Freyberg, the Commonwealth commander on Crete, requested evacuation.<sup>21</sup> London approved the withdrawal and Field Marshal Wavell relayed the permission to Crete on May 27th.

Once again, the soldiers of the Empire placed their complete trust in the Royal Navy. The distance from Cairo to Crete precluded any fighter support for the evacuation, and severely reduced bomber support. All the planners realized that the excellent late spring weather and German air superiority would result in a beating for the Royal Navy. Because of the air threat, the Navy chose only high speed warships (destroyers and cruisers) for the evacuation.

Specialized anti-aircraft cruisers were included in the evacuation flotillas. The remainder of the Mediterranean Fleet sailed to protect the evacuation from possible Italian naval intervention.

The British Navy conducted the evacuations from three locations: Heraklion and Retimo, on the north side of the Island, and Sphakia on the south side. Commonwealth troops, aided by the islanders, delayed back to the evacuation points, harassed by the *Luftwaffe* along the way. German casualties prevented serious pursuit from developing until the reinforcing mountain troops were fully organized on the ground. Small boat shuttled the troops from the beaches to waiting warships. All evacuations were performed under cover of darkness.<sup>30</sup>

The cost to the Army and Navy was very high. As expected, the Royal Navy suffered severely, losing three cruisers, five destroyers and 2000 sailors to German air attacks. In addition, two battleships, one carrier, two cruisers and 12 other warships were severely damaged but managed to escape. Units such as the Army's 14th Brigade suffered more casualties on the voyage to Egypt than during the battle for the island. The Navy was able to extract almost all British troops awaiting evacuation at Heraklion, over half of the forces at Sphakia, and a few hundred at Retimo before operations ceased. The Navy succeeded in saving a total of 14,967 troops of 29,614 on the island.<sup>31</sup>

The crucial factor in these two evacuations, especially that conducted in Crete, was the willingness of the Royal

Navy to carry out their mission. In spite of the terrible beating it had taken, the Royal Navy regarded the evacuation operation from Crete as epitomizing the spirit of the Navy.

The double evacuation from Greece and Crete underscored the value of evacuating troops with their equipment vice leaving it behind. The troops sent to Crete from Greece arrived with only small arms and light weapons. The operational pursuit conducted by the Germans caught these troops unprepared for further battle. Lacking heavy weapons, their presence on Crete only contributed to the eventual casualty list, and compelled the Navy to accept enormous risk to retrieve them. Had the British possessed more than a handful of tanks and sufficient artillery it is unlikely that the outnumbered German parachutists could have survived, much less won. Although German casualties were extremely high, they drove the British from Crete by 1 June, 1941.

The other factor worth examining is the risk of evacuation versus the gain. The Royal Navy risked its theater operational assets to retrieve slightly more than half of the troops trapped on the island. In terms of manpower, the 15,000 troops saved were not significant to the British position in the Mediterranean theater. In moral terms, however, the British Fleet defied both the *Luftwaffe* and the Italian fleet, and reinforced its own dominance, particularly over the latter. The British were also undoubtedly conscious of the political repercussions they might suffer in Australia and New Zealand if Commonwealth troops were left to their fate.



## GUADALCANAL

At the end of 1942, the Japanese high command decided to discontinue offensive operations in the Pacific and defend successive island "perimeter" lines against the Americans. Major support operations in the South Pacific and Solomon Islands were suspended after the defeat of the Japanese Navy in a series of violent night battles.<sup>40</sup> These battles, along with growing American air power on Guadalcanal, interdicted Japanese supply movements from Rabaul down the Solomons.

On Guadalcanal, the Imperial Japanese Army troops of General Hyakutake's *17th Army* were in an appalling state. As a result of tactical blunders and piecemeal reinforcement, the *17th Army* had been unable to defeat the Marines in four months of battle. The Marines were relieved by the XIV (US) Army Corps, commanded by LTG Patch, which exerted continuous pressure against Japanese defenses. Japanese resupply was non-existent, since the growing strength of the US Fleet instilled caution in the Japanese Combined Fleet and prevented attempts to force supplies through. By the end of 1942, hundreds of Japanese soldiers were dead from starvation, malaria and dysentery.<sup>41</sup>

Pressure from General MacArthur's New Guinea forces and the impending withdrawal of the Combined Fleet from Truk to the west compelled the termination of all operations in the eastern Solomons. On 4 January 1943, General Imamura and Vice Admiral Kusaka, theater Army and Navy Commanders, issued

orders to begin the evacuation forces on Guadalcanal.

The Japanese faced a major challenge in planning for an evacuation of the troops on Guadalcanal. The Americans had achieved ground, air, and sea superiority: and were preparing a major offensive to destroy the remaining Japanese on the island.

Unlike the European evacuations, the Japanese planned and executed a deception operation to cover their withdrawal. They portrayed a major reinforcement of Guadalcanal combined with a strike by Combined Fleet into waters around Guadal anal. As a result of these deception operations, made believable by the presence of 50,000 troops at Rabaul and heavy naval forces still in the South Pacific, the Americans concluded that another Japanese offensive was imminent. The defeat suffered by the American Navy off Tassaforanga on the night of November 30th reminded the Americans that the Japanese Navy was still potent.<sup>42</sup>

On 10 January, XIV (US) Corps cautiously opened its final offensive. General Hyakutake, realizing his Army was disintegrating, ordered a series of leapfrog withdrawals toward the northern tip of Guadalcanal at Cape Esperance. To assist in withdrawal and lend credence to the deception story, a special Japanese Marine assault unit of 600 men, the "*Yano Battalion*", was landed in mid-January.<sup>43</sup> This fresh unit conducted limited attacks and patrolling operations against the Americans.

Beginning on the night of 1 February, destroyers of the Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) removed the survivors of 17th

Army. Nineteen destroyers of the *8th Fleet*, with air cover flown from Rabaul, raced down "the slot" from their forward bases in New Georgia and loaded the remnants of the Japanese expeditionary force. Landing craft and small coasters ferried the troops out to the waiting warships 1,000 yards offshore. Six hundred troops were taken aboard each destroyer designated as a transport while others fought off interfering American PT boats. On the nights of 4 and 7 February the Japanese Navy repeated the operation, removing a total of 13,040 troops by daylight on 8 February. This was all that remained of the 40,000 troops that had been sent to Guadalcanal. One IJN destroyer was torpedoed by a PT boat.<sup>44</sup>

The Americans remained convinced that the Japanese destroyers' presence night after night heralded the arrival of fresh Japanese troops. General Patch ordered an amphibious assault on the west side of Cape Esperance near Verahue on 1 February 1943, in order to trap *17th Army*. But by the time the pincers closed on the 10th of February, the Japanese had escaped, aided by terrain and rear guard actions by small stay-behind elements.<sup>45</sup>

Following evacuation, the Japanese command dispersed the remnants of *17th Army* all over the Pacific Theater. The *15th Brigade (Kawaguchi)* was sent to Burma. The *2nd Division* was sent to the Philippines, while the *38th Division* was sent to New Britain and integrated into the *8th Area Army*.<sup>46</sup>

In many respects, the Japanese escape from Guadalcanal is the most remarkable of all the successful evacuations in this half century. Their ground forces had been defeated on land,

and had been virtually without supplies for three months. The nearest Japanese air support was based at Rabaul, 500 miles to the Northwest. The Americans had both carrier-based and land-based day and night air support. The Japanese fleet, bereft of transports, could commit only 20 destroyers and some barges to support the operations, against the presence of major American fleet units and PT boats based in the Guadalcanal area.

Three factors made the escape from Guadalcanal possible:

- 1) The terrain and Japanese defensive tactics combined to slow American pursuit of 17th Army. The Americans respected the Japanese' superior training in night operations, and were loathe to continue attacks after darkness. The Japanese used the night to slip back while covering their withdrawal with stay-behind elements.

- 2) The Americans continued to misread Japanese intentions until 8 February. General Patch, confused by Japanese deception, did not press his pursuit as vigorously as he might have, given the impending breakup of the Japanese forces. Compounding his difficulties, his Marine air reconnaissance wing was withdrawn and replaced by an Army unit which was not fully operational until after the final Japanese pullout.\* The American fleet and area commander, Admiral Halsey, maintained his heavy warships in a position to counter a Japanese fleet move to the Solomons, rather than releasing them for close support of General Patch.

- 3) The daring and seamanship of the IJN destroyers and their superiority in night operations gave the Japanese the

tool with which to snatch 17th Army from Guadalcanal. Having been badly stung at Tassaforanga, the U.S. Navy was reluctant to interdict the "Tokyo Express" unless large ships such as cruisers or battleships were part of the Japanese effort.

The Japanese Navy successfully evacuated a much smaller force from the Aleutians later in 1943. But by the end of the year, American naval and air forces had wrought such damage on the Japanese fleet that the IJN no longer was prepared to attempt evacuations of other forces.

#### **HUNGNAM, NORTH KOREA**

In November 1950, the Red Chinese Army launched its second counteroffensive against UN troops advancing deep into North Korea. At the time of this offensive, X Corps, operating independently of Eighth Army, consisted of three US divisions (1st Marine, 7th Infantry, and 3rd Infantry) and two ROK divisions (3rd and Capitol). The widely scattered units of X Corps were defeated piecemeal and forced to fight their way south. The heaviest attacks were concentrated against the 1st Marine Division south of the Chosin Reservoir. The 1st Marines, along with a few survivors of Task Force Faith of the Army's 7th ID, fought their way south out of encirclement at Hagaru-ri toward the coast.

The Chinese intervention in great force compelled the retreat of both Eighth Army and X Corps. X Corps was in a predicament. They had originally landed at Wonsan, to the south. Their line of communications had been established on sea to Hungnam and thence inland. Rapid Chinese infiltration south and the lack of any alternate line of communication

overland to South Korea forced the concentration of the Corps in the Hungnam area. Following a review of the theater situation by his joint staff, General MacArthur ordered X Corps to withdraw by sea to Pusan. From Pusan X Corps was to move north to new defensive position in central South Korea.

By 8 December, when withdrawal orders were issued, X Corps was faced with the problem of extricating the Marines from encirclement at Hagaru-ri and securing the evacuation area. X Corps concentrated all available air support against the Communist Chinese Forces (CCF) facing 1st Marines, while other elements of the Corps, some as far north as the Yalu River, withdrew towards Hungnam. The largely uncommitted 3rd (U.S.) Infantry Division moved north from positions around Wonsan to Hungnam to secure the port and support the withdrawal of 1st Marines. Far Eastern Air Force (FEAF) provided airlift assets to the Marines at Hagaru-ri in order to extract the many wounded prior to the breakout. The Theater Command mustered all available shipping and naval resources at Hungnam. In addition, the Corps received specialized personnel such as naval fire control parties and beachmasters.<sup>49</sup> Colonel E.R. Forney, USMC, headed the staff which planned and executed the port and beach operations at Hungnam.<sup>50</sup>

The X Corps planned to withdraw all personnel and equipment during the evacuation. This was the decision of General Edward M. Almond, Commander X Corps, and it was coupled with the urgent desire to have X Corps available for commitment in the South by 27 December, 1950. In addition,

General Almond made the decision to evacuate Korean refugees to the south, with the assistance of ROK Army and Korean Naval units.<sup>51</sup>

The evacuation from Hungnam was carried out over the period 10-24 December. 3rd ID and 7th ID manned the initial line of defenses while the 1st Marine Division loaded aboard transports and departed for South Korea. Next in order of departure, 7th ID and the Korean divisions withdrew through the 3rd Division. That division in turn fell back to a prepared inner defensive line. 3rd ID units then pulled back to a final perimeter line and fed units to the port and beaches. Simultaneously, X Corps engineers prepared Hungnam for destruction. On 24 December, 1950 the last American troops departed by landing craft and Hungnam was leveled by demolition. By Christmas day, 1950, X Corps had evacuated 105,000 troops, 17,500 vehicles, 350,000 tons of supplies, and nearly 100,000 refugees. General Almond stated in his report that every operable vehicle had been successfully evacuated.<sup>52</sup> Within one month, X Corps had fully redeployed along new defensive positions in the South.

In contrast with other evacuation operations, the Hungnam operation is remarkable in several respects:

1. Naval gunfire-- Unlike all the other evacuations, X Corps had powerful naval gunfire support and naval gunfire liaison teams to direct it. During the course of the evacuation, warships fired nearly 35,000 rounds, preventing CCP forces from massing even as U.S. artillery was withdrawn.

2. Reserves-- The presence of the 3rd ID allowed X Corps

to establish the defense with fresh forces. Although the Marines and 7th ID had been severely mauled, the 3rd Division had seen little combat and was fully prepared to hold against the rapidly weakening CCF.

3) Substantial Airlift-- For the first time, transport aircraft supported a major evacuation operation. Transport aircraft removed 3000 men, 50 tons of bombs, 200 vehicles, and some refugees from Yongpo Airfield between 10 and 15 December, when defending troops withdrew behind the airfield.<sup>33</sup>

4) Refugees-- X Corps extracted nearly 100,000 refugees from Hungnam. Refugee marshalling areas were located outside the perimeter and ROK soldiers, directed by the Corps Provost Marshal, supervised outloading of these people. Both Navy transports and Korean vessels embarked refugees from the vicinity of the Sono-Jin fishing docks.

There were six key reasons why the evacuation of X Corps proceeded so well:

1) Enemy situation-- The CCF suffered enormous casualties in their attacks at Chosin Reservoir and lacked the means to exploit their success. They had no tanks, artillery, vehicle transport, and few aircraft in December of 1950. Once the Americans formed a doctrinal perimeter backed by artillery, warships, air power, and reserves, CCF light infantry attacks stood no chance of success, despite repeated efforts.

2) Naval air and gunfire prevented CCF troops from effectively massing or conducting front line resupply.

3) As discussed previously the 3rd ID provided a



physically and perhaps more important, a morally fresh force which had not been beaten by the CCF. Consequently, the 3rd ID remained cocky throughout the evacuation.

4) The smooth and rapid outloading of huge amounts of equipment and supplies reflected the long experience of the Army, Navy, and particularly the USMC with amphibious operations. Having routinely moved large forces in World War II and Korea, procedures were well established.

5) 7th Fleet and Far Eastern Air Forces had the resources to support the mission. The enemy had no navy and refused to commit his airpower. Consequently, all available sea and air power could support the extraction effort without reserving substantial assets to protect against enemy countermeasures.

6) The X Corps staff conducted simultaneous planning for multiple operations by forming three planning sections. One section planned and executed the withdrawal, a large portion of the staff planned and executed the evacuation, and an advance element was dispatched early to South Korea to supervise the debarkation and redeployment of the Corps. While some may argue against large staffs, this case illustrated the need for corps staffs to be large enough to plan and execute multiple, simultaneous operations.

Included in Appendix 1 are the "lessons learned" published by X Corps nearly 40 years ago. These summarize the important points in a joint evacuation.

### PART III -- OBSERVATIONS

What criteria for a successful evacuation can be drawn

from the operations above? The differences in the circumstances surrounding each operation preclude direct comparison. However, there are three congruities which seem to present themselves. First, in each case the commander or commanders on the scene made a timely decision to evacuate. Timely refers not only to the decision to retreat, but the decision to muster the necessary evacuation means within the theater. A great deal of detail concerning the logistical organization of each evacuation was omitted in the discussion of each operation. However, the fact that the evacuations in each case succeeded in spite of the short preparation times reflects on the competence and improvisational abilities of the planners concerned. Those who organized the evacuation support were not amateurs.

Second, evacuations demand a synchronization of one's own means, while taking advantage of the extension of the victorious enemy forces. Clausewitz's concept of culmination defines the forces at work.<sup>34</sup> The most successful extraction, at least in terms of percent of force retrieved and subsequent employment, was Hungham. There the effects of ground, air and naval resources were synchronized to accomplish not only an evacuation, but to inflict a great deal of punishment on the pursuing Chinese. The obverse is also true: the combined effects of German air power, ground pursuit, and the threat of Italian naval strikes combined to make the evacuations from Greece and Crete the most costly. Where the enemy had the capability to synchronize against the evacuation at Guadalcanal, the Japanese used stealth and

deception to accomplish what main force could not.

The crucial third factor is the element of time. In the theory of war proposed by Clausewitz, time accrues to the favor of the defender.<sup>35</sup> The opposite appears to be true in the case of an evacuation. Time wasted accrues to the eventual benefit of the attacker. There is a window of opportunity within which the operational commander may conduct operations to extract the beaten force. Evacuations which extend beyond the time in which the opponent is surprised or misled concerning the purpose of the evacuation risk not only the trapped ground force, but the evacuation resources as well.

#### PART IV -- CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The intervening 40 years since the Hungnam evacuation have brought about many changes in techniques and equipment. What challenges might confront planners of an operational evacuation today? American forces remain poised for commitment overseas in many theaters. The means of projecting forces into distant theaters of operations has evolved from seaborne to airlift and sealift supported, with airlift moving the bulk of the personnel.

American planners face several new threats when considering the problems of evacuating a large force projected overseas. Conventional weaponry such as rocket artillery and improved munitions are in the hands of not only the major powers, but numerous emerging powers. Anti-ship missiles, ground and air launched, present a formidable

threat to both transports and warships. These missiles can also be delivered by fast attack vessels of the type possessed by many Third World countries.

Chemical weapons, used in the Iran-Iraq conflict, have the capacity of shutting down port facilities and airfields. Improved mines, like those which halted all shipping into Haiphong in 1972, are available to many potential opponents. Even unsophisticated mines like those used by Iran in 1986-87 would have the effect of disrupting a major evacuation by sea, given certain geographical factors. Advanced lightweight surface to air missiles can make air operations in an enclave very hazardous, as the Soviets have discovered in Afghanistan since 1986. Transport aircraft and helicopters are particularly vulnerable.

American forces possess some important new tools to assist in the rapid evacuation of forces. Helicopters and vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) aircraft such as the Osprey, ease the problem of retrograde movement and would probably eliminate the requirement for troops to be ferried by boat to waiting ships. Helicopters also eliminate the requirement for piers and moles to speed the loading of troops, a la Dunkirk, and permit warships and transports to remain several kilometers off the coast for safety. Since warships need to maneuver violently and require clear fields of fire for defense against sea-skimming missiles, "sea room" is a necessity. Likewise, the new family of air cushion landing craft could rapidly remove large numbers of troops to ships well off shore, again eliminating the requirement for

control of a port. Working in combination with assault transports, equipment could be removed using these craft.

Perhaps the greatest new tools available to the evacuation planner are transport aircraft. Assuming air access to a beleaguered force can be maintained, enormous numbers of personnel can be extracted. During the collapse of South Vietnam, for example, 60,000 people were airlifted out of that country in a two week period.<sup>5</sup> The key considerations in planning for extraction by air are the ability to keep the airfield secure and the air transit routes open, given the threat of artillery, missiles and enemy fighters. These threats were conspicuously absent during the exodus from Vietnam.

Air evacuation alone would appear to be most useful in a lower threat environment because of the difficulties in securing a 360 degree airhead. Obviously, the more sophisticated the air defense, the further the perimeter must be extended to keep the airfield and approaches secure. Aircraft on the ground are also vulnerable to artillery strikes. The USAF has demonstrated that it can conduct airlift operations in moderate artillery fire, but it would risk the airlift assets of the theater to operate in an area constantly under heavy fire.

Warships, on the other hand, are not particularly vulnerable to shore artillery unless they are in close and moving slowly. Unfortunately for the evacuation planner, modern American warships, despite their larger displacements, probably would not transport as many personnel as some of

their earlier counterparts because of the necessity to keep decks and superstructures clear to allow missile firing. Large numbers of troops could be carried below decks, but this would dangerously limit damage control operations, and make the escape of personnel very difficult in case the ship were sinking or on fire. It would be very useful to classify each type of vessel as to its maximum emergency capacity.

Troop carrying ships are not as readily available as in World War II. The Navy has about 60 amphibious warfare ships of all types in active service or reserve.<sup>57</sup> Amphibious shipping within a given theater could be used to support an evacuation if not already loaded with Marine units. Cruise ships or passenger ferries could supplement Navy vessels, but only if they had been previously contracted or expropriated. Otherwise, the likelihood of locating such vessels in a combat zone in time to effect an evacuation is low.

Whether the evacuation order specifies air or sea evacuation, the greatest problem faced by the beaten expeditionary force is moral. Some combination of factors must contribute to the restoration of confidence in the beaten force. In the case of the British, it was the appearance of the Royal Navy. For the Americans of X Corps, it was the presence of powerful land and sea forces which checked the retreat. In the case of the Japanese, a creditable deception story bought time.

Evacuations test the "jointness" of a theater force as does no other operation. First, the physical resources must be on hand or obtained. This may entail the diversion of

forces from other major operations, and quite possibly require component commanders to place critical resources at risk. Second, the command and control of such an operation may demand that pride of place and indeed, operational control, be ceded to another service with very little time for compromises.

Given these factors, what are the implications to the current planner confronted with the task of planning and executing a withdrawal under conditions of defeat?

1) The planner must weigh the costs against the benefits, while remaining sensitive to the political implications of not just defeat but American prisoners in large numbers. The British at Crete ran enormous risk to rescue their trapped forces. Why? The effect on British policy of losing several thousand prisoners was negligible. There were already thousands of British prisoners in Axis hands. Admiral Cunningham clearly considered the moral risk greater than the physical, and defied the Luftwaffe and Italian fleet to stop his forces. Our situation, involving commitment of forces to a limited war, may be quite different.

2) Naval and Air Forces supporting the evacuation must be prepared to fight high intensity engagements and suffer heavy losses. Enemy focus will naturally shift to attack or high value units of both services. But the existence of the defeated ground force hinges on the will of the extracting elements to continue the mission despite losses. The operational commander may use the evacuation to bring

previously impotent components into the battle to inflict losses on the enemy, as at Hungnam.

3) Planning staffs should be divided in order to fight the defensive battle, support the evacuation, and supervise redeployment. This division of effort must occur as early as possible in order to organize the embarkation and debarkation efforts.

4) The theater commander must make the decision to evacuate in time to carry out the operation. Sequels to campaigns should be considered which admit the possibility of defeat. In this respect, accurate and timely intelligence allows the commander to ascertain the point of no return. It may also provide the key to incorporating a successful deception operation, such as that mounted by the Japanese.

5) Operational planners must not forget the immense flexibility inherent in US theater forces, no matter what the situation, and therefore keep the long view. No nation possesses the power projection and retrieval capabilities of the United States. By proper use of all these resources, the theater commander can retrieve critical assets and retain operational flexibility.

6) Should the operational planner always include evacuation plans? The careful observer will conclude correctly that there are pluses and minuses to preparing such plans. On the positive side, an evacuation is far easier to conduct if the preliminary planning has been accomplished. The negative is a moral issue: the force planners spend scarce time on preparing for defeat rather than planning to



win. General Mathew Ridgway in Korea was confronted with a similar predicament. He wanted to instill a desire to win in the demoralized Eighth Army, but had to consider the possibility of continued Chinese success, and more ominously, the threat of Russian intervention on the side of the Communists. Ridgway's solution was to plan for a possible withdrawal from South Korea to Japan, but to keep the existence of such plans secret from all levels below Eighth Army.<sup>52</sup> Thus, tactical planning continued to emphasize the positive, while operational planning focused on necessary contingencies.

Each of the operations examined deserve far more careful analysis than a monograph can provide. Nonetheless, one may conclude that the review of a spectrum of evacuations provides the practitioner of operational art with a new perspective on the nature of theater operations. In this regard, evacuations link strategy and tactics through the application of joint means to preserve future operational capabilities.

## APPENDIX 1

### LESSONS LEARNED, X (U.S.) CORPS, HUNGNAM EVACUATION

#### TACTICAL

- 1) The principles of the defense and retrograde movement were fully applicable in this operation.
- 2) Where the principles of defense are properly employed, an American unit can successfully defend against a force far superior in numerical strength.
- 3) An evacuation by sea is not an amphibious operation in reverse, although some principles of amphibious warfare do apply such as the withdrawal from the final perimeter to the landing craft on a broad front.
- 4) In an evacuation by sea, the perimeter must be large enough to secure uninterrupted loading operations in the dock area.
- 5) In an evacuation by sea, when supporting troops are withdrawn, tactical troops must become more self-sufficient.
- 6) In an evacuation by sea the withdrawal of troops must be carefully coordinated to prevent intermingling of units.
- 7) In an evacuation by sea an exceptionally close relationship must be maintained between tactical and logistical planners.

#### LOGISTICAL

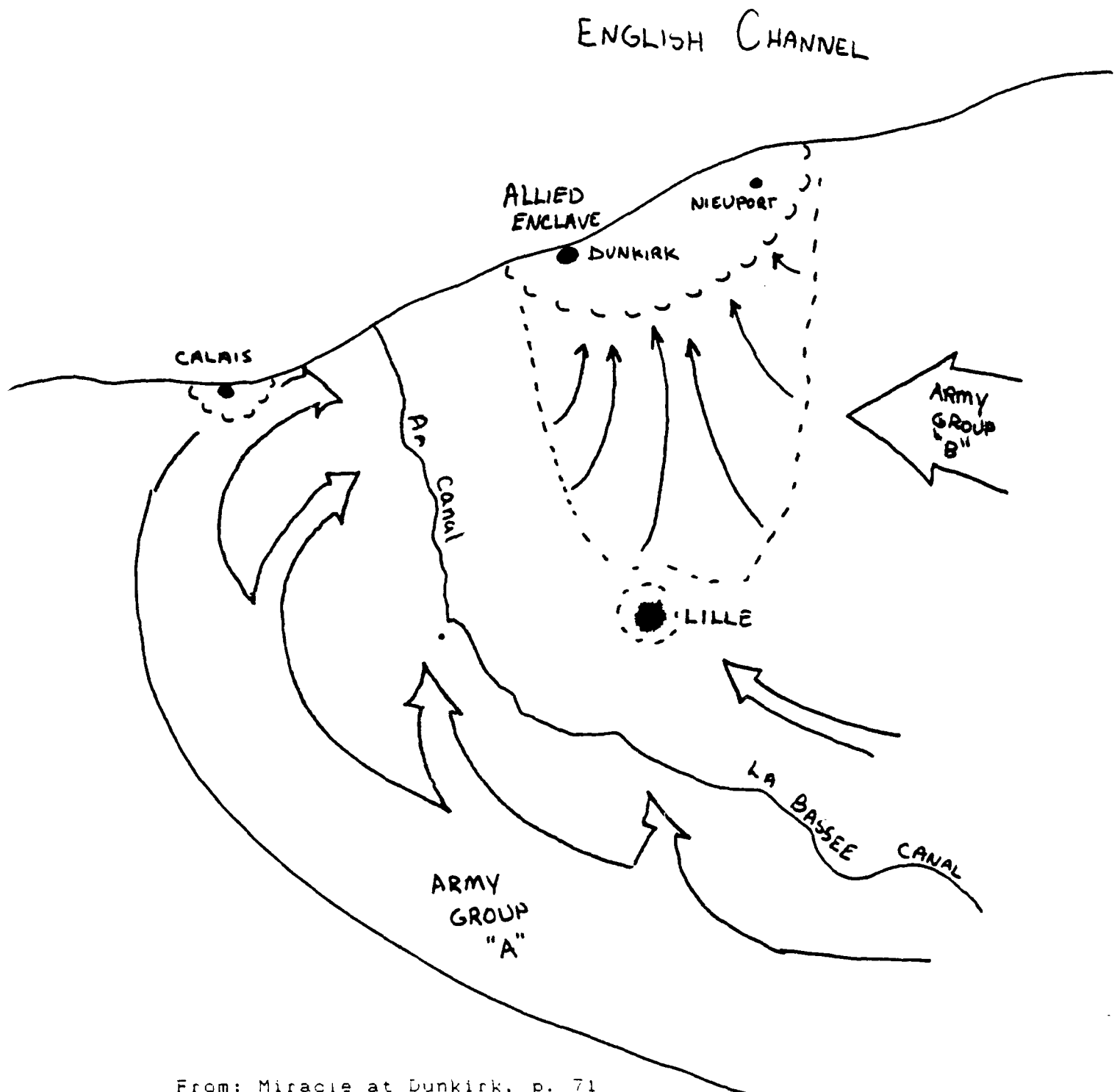
- 1) In an evacuation by sea the setting up of a Control Group gives the flexibility necessary in operations of this nature where set plans are extremely difficult to develop and carry out.
- 2) In an evacuation by sea the establishment of supply dumps to supply each withdrawal position saves transportation, permits the closing out by issue of the forward dumps, and eliminates confusion at the beach where the maximum effort is being made to outload, rather than offload additional supplies.
- 3) In an evacuation by sea, some service units must be retained in the beachhead until the final phase of an evacuation.
- 4) In an evacuation by sea a reserve of cargo ships and LST's must be retained through the final phase of an

evacuation to meet all unforeseen contingencies that may develop.

5) The maximum use of all means of evacuation should be used, land, sea, and air; and during the short period of time available, each transporting command must make an all out effort to carry the maximum loads in the least turn around time. this is aided by well organized debarking areas and early evacuation of Control Groups to those areas.

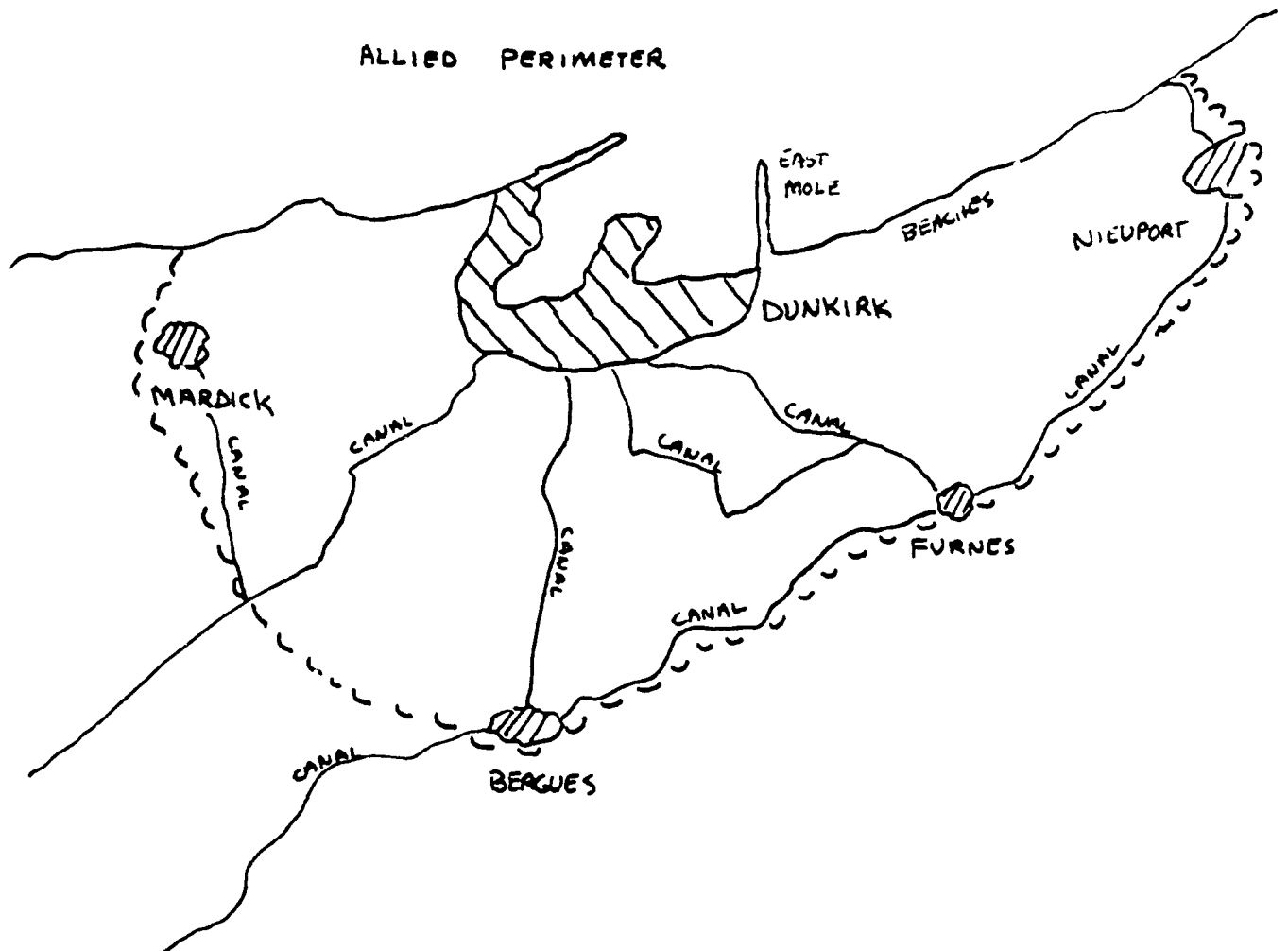
From: X Corps Special Report, Dec. '50: Subject - The Hungnam Evacuation, 9-24 Dec 1950. (Prepared by Headquarters, X (U.S.) Corps. Originally classified SECRET, since declassified).

DUNKIRK, 1940



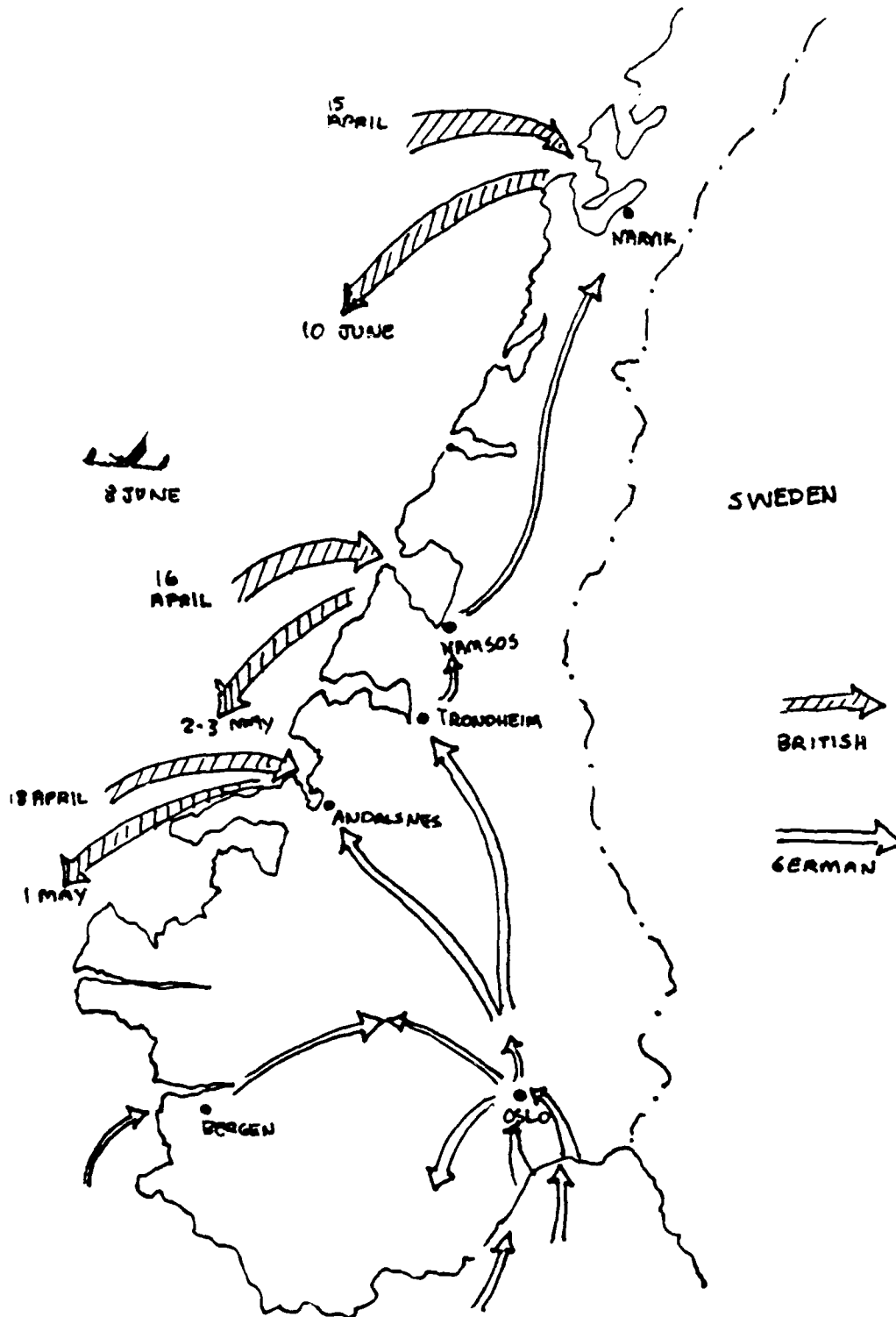
From: Miracle at Dunkirk, p. 71

DUNKIRK, 1940

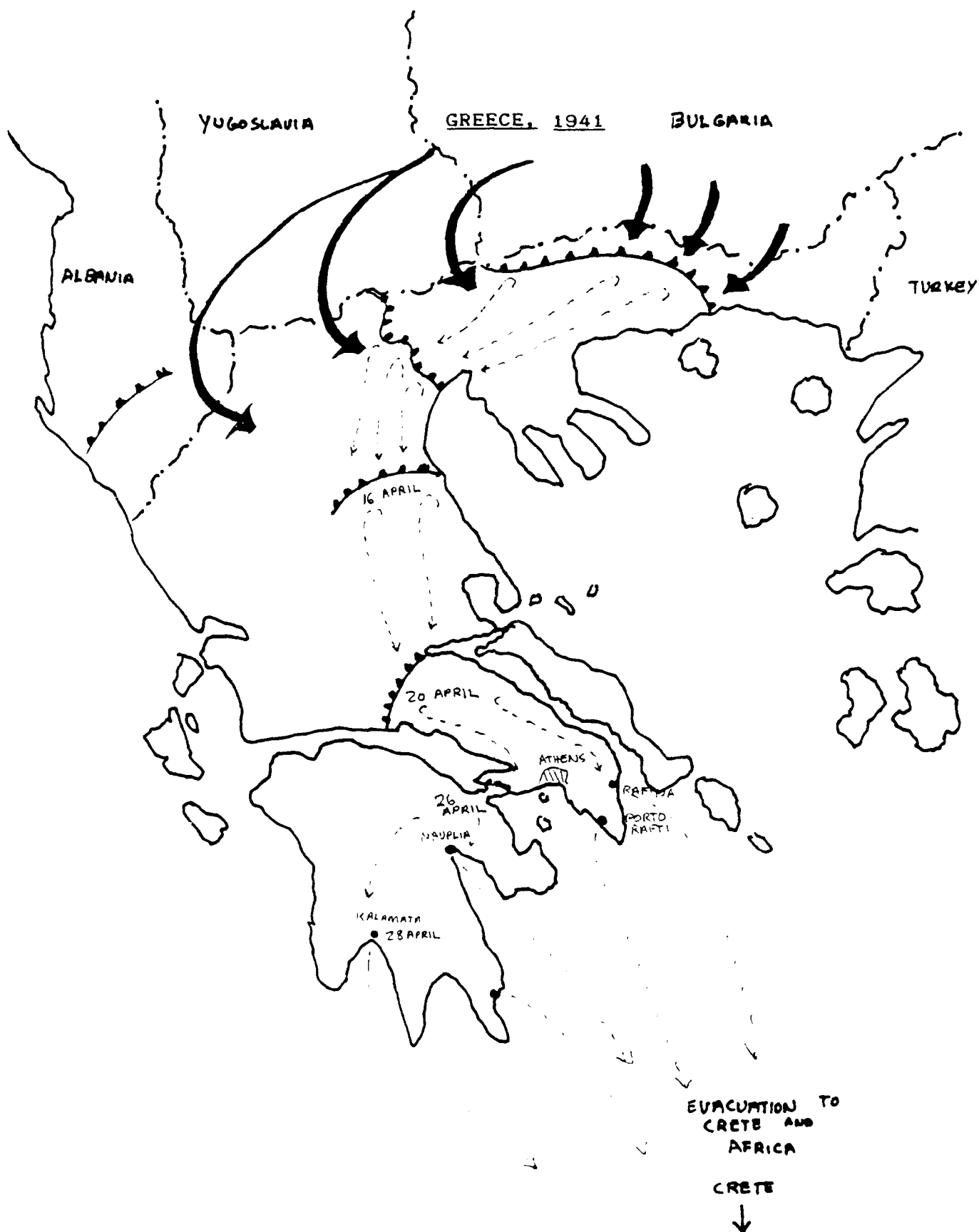


From: France and Belgium, 1940, p. 173

NORWAY, 1940

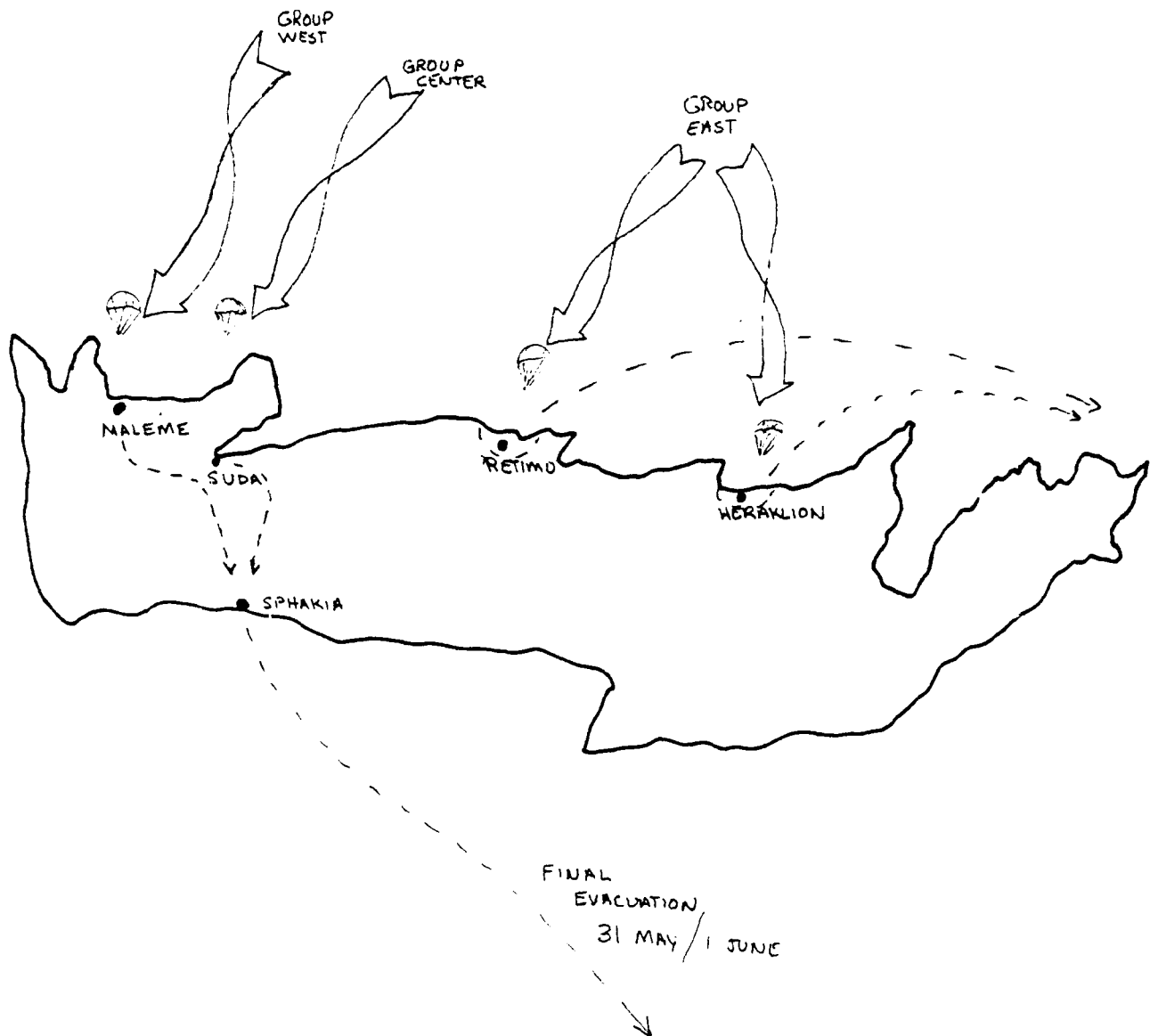


From: Atlas of World War II, p. 16



From: Atlas of World War II, p. 31

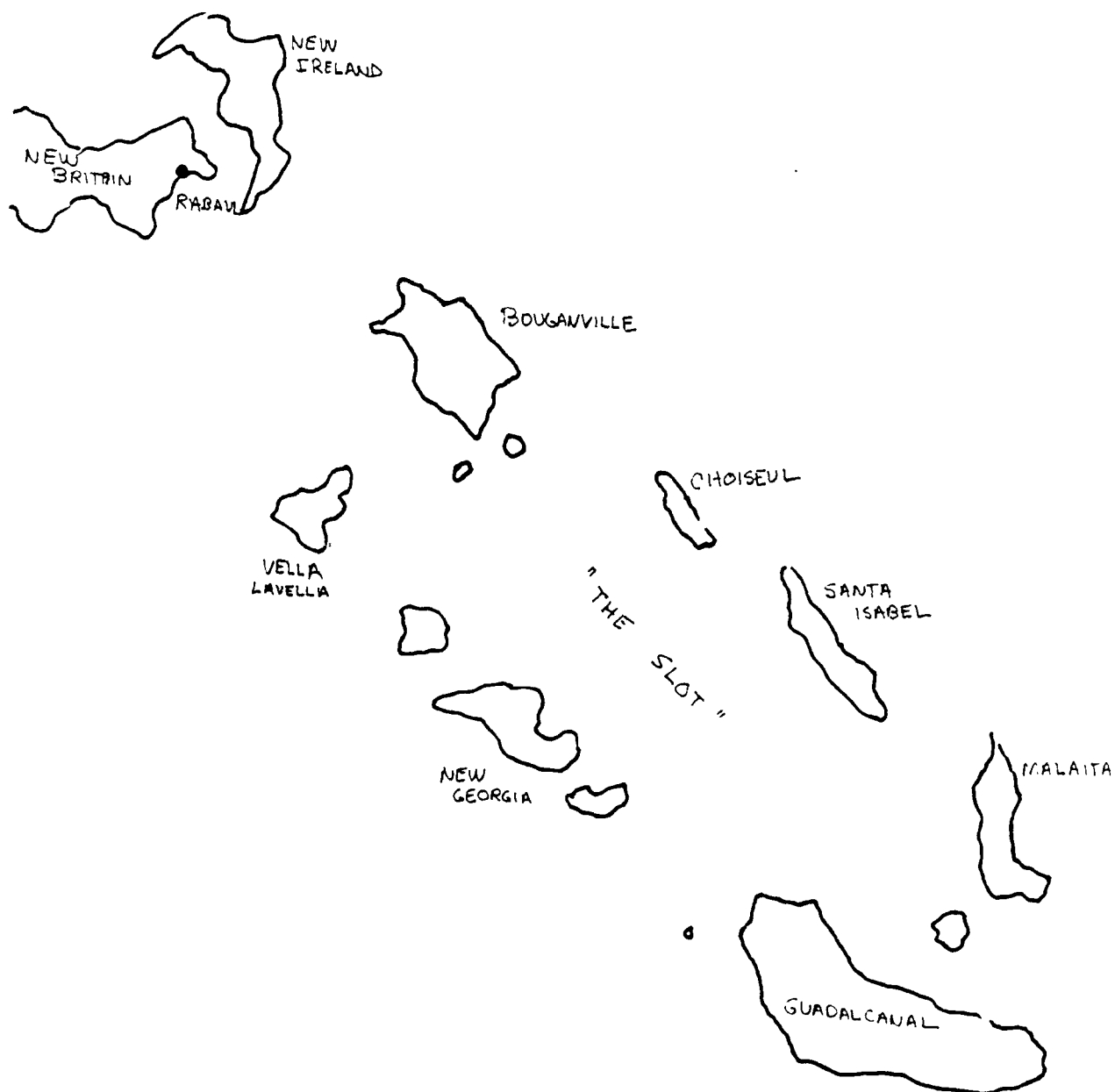
CRETE, 1941



From: Airborne Operations, p. 60

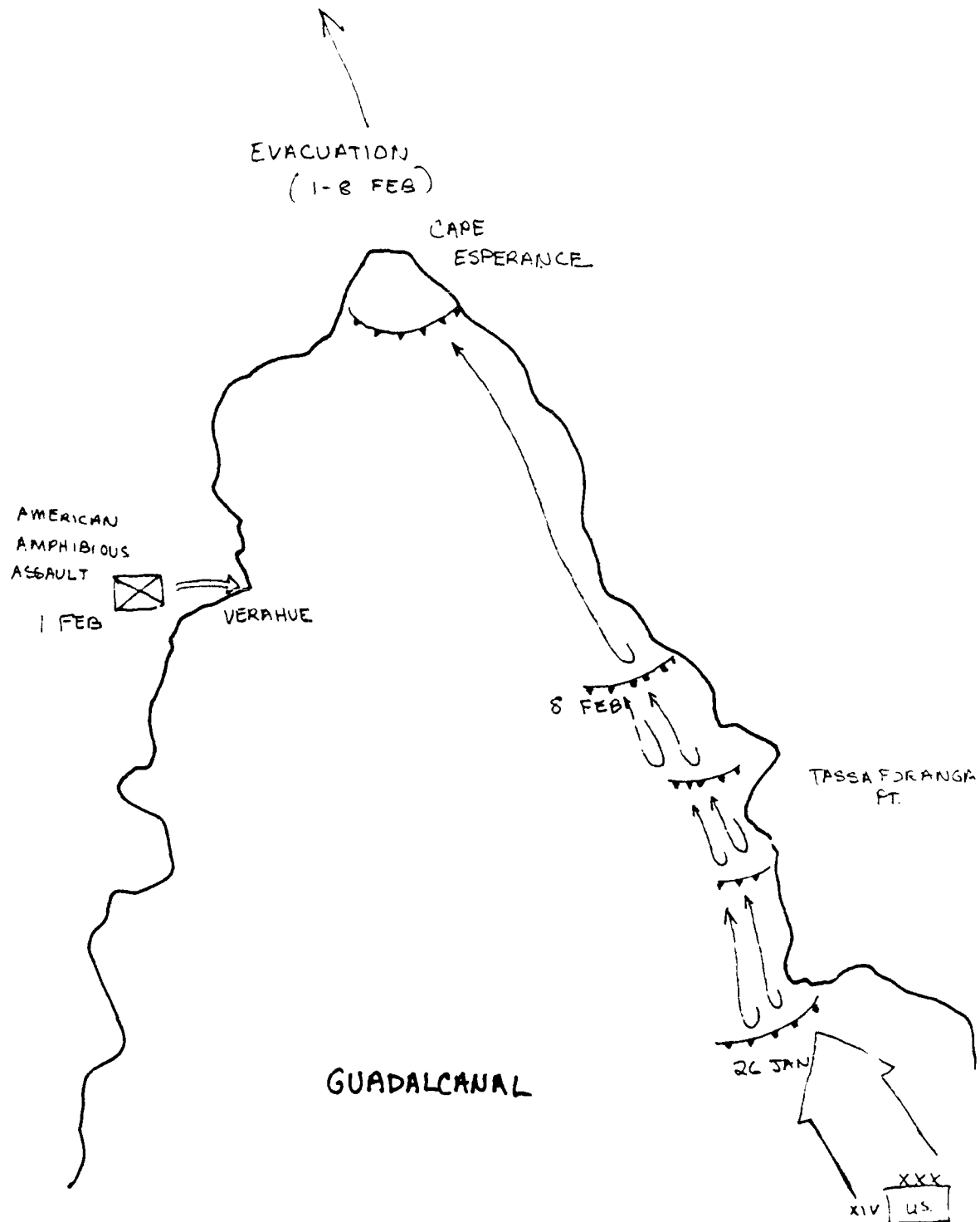


GUADALCANAL, 1943



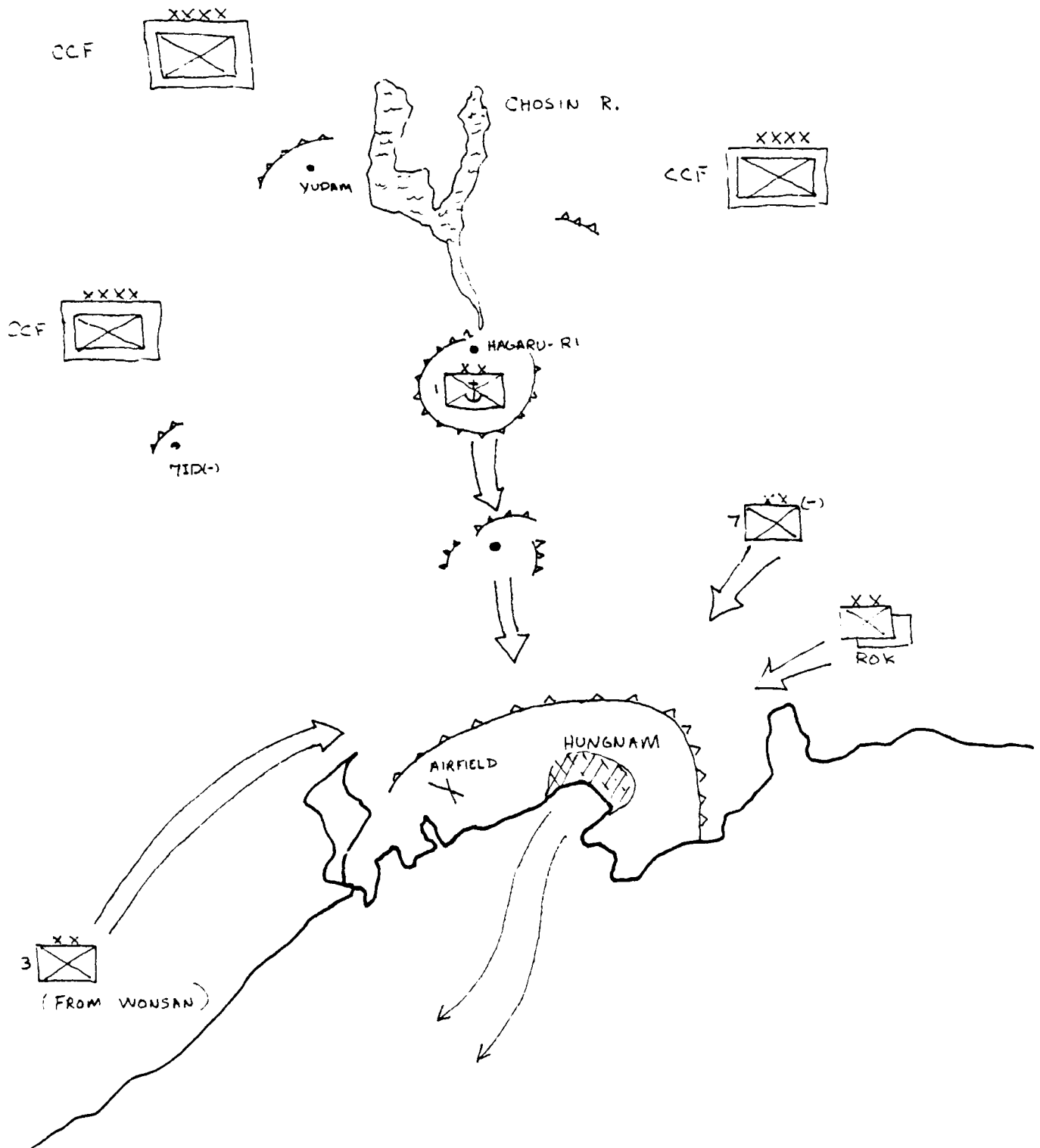
From: Guadalcanal: The First Offensive, end maps

GUADALCANAL, 1943



From: Guadalcanal: The First Offensive, end maps

HUNGNAM, 1950



From: The Forgotten War, p. 535

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1. Clausewitz, Carl Von., On War, (Translated by Peter Paret and Michael Howard, Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1984). p.271
2. FM 100-6, Large Unit Operations, Coordinating Draft, (Ft. Leavenworth, KS, USACGSC, 30 Sep 1987). p.2-1
3. Cooper, Mathew, The German Army, 1933-1945, (Reprinted at Ft. Leavenworth, KS, by CGSC in 1988. Originally published in 1978). p. 387, 388
4. Bond, Brian, France and Belgium 1939-1940, (Cranbury, New Jersey, Associated University Presses Inc., 1979) p. 100
5. Ibid., pp. 142
7. Shirer, William L., The Collapse of the Third Republic, (Reproduced at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 1985) p.745
8. Ibid., p. 747
9. Despite the situation at Dunkirk and the pleas of the French, the British retained 25 fighter squadrons, the minimum number they believed were required for the defense of the home island.
10. Lord, Walter., Miracle at Dunkirk, (New York, The Viking Press, 1982) p. 150
11. Cooper, Mathew, The German Army, 1933-1945, op. cit.,
12. Bond, Brian, op. cit., p. 141, 142, 168
13. Lord, W., op. cit., p. 152-160
14. Bond, Brian, op. cit., p. 159, 161.
15. Lord, W., op. cit., p. 147
16. Lord, W., op. cit., p. 168
17. Shirer, W., op. cit., p. 756
18. Lord, W., op. cit., p. 144
19. Lord, W., op. cit., p. 200
20. Lord, W., op. cit., p.147
21. Lord, W., op. cit., p. 168. Lord cites several instances of soldiers disregarding their own leaders, but heeding the instructions of the shore parties.

22. The genesis of the Narvik expedition lay in the Allied plan to assist Finland against the Russians. Fortunately for England, Finland surrendered before the Allies could start a war with the Soviets. From the German viewpoint, any Allied move toward Narvik threatened the vital iron ore shipments from Sweden. When the Royal Navy siezed the German ship Altmark in Norwegian waters, Hitler ordered the execution of Operation WESERUHBUNG, the siezure of Denmark and Norway.

23. Roskill, J.W., The War at Sea, 1939-1945, Volume I, The Defensive, History of the Second World War, United Kingdom Military Series, Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London, 1954, p. 136

24. Macintyre, Donald, Narvik, (New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 1959), p. 138

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28. Higham, Robert., Diary of a Disaster, (Lexington, Kentucky, The University Press of Kentucky, 1986) p. 5

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30. Ibid., p. 94

31. Ibid., p. 96

32. Ibid., p. 119

33. Ibid., p. 104

34. Ibid., p. 136

35. Ibid., p. 155

36. Airborne Operations, (Edited by Philip de St. Croix, London, England, Salamander Books, Inc., 1982), p. 61. Of the 8,100 men who parachuted into Crete with the 7th Parachute Division, 1,520 were KIA, 1,500 were WIA, and 1,511 were MIA, for a total of 4,522 casualties.

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38. Ibid., Buckley describes the evacuation on pages 261 through 280.

39. Ibid., p. 291

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41. Toland, John. The Rising Sun - The Decline and Fall of the Japanese Empire 1936-1945. (New York, Random House, 1970). p. 421
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43. Miller, John Jr., The US Army in WW II, Pacific Theater of Operations: Guadalcanal, The First Offensive. (Washington, DC, Office of the Chief of Military History, 1949). p. 349
44. Toland, J., op. cit., p. 429
45. Miller, John Jr., Guadalcanal, The First Offensive. op. cit., p. 343-348
46. Miller, John Jr., U.S. Army in WW II, The Pacific Theater of Operations: Cartwheel, The Reduction of Rabaul. (Washington, DC, Office of the Chief of Military History, 1959). p. 36 (footnote)
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48. X Corps Special Report, Dec. 50: Subject - The Hungnam Evacuation, 9-24 Dec 1950. (Prepared by Headquarter, X (U.S.) Corps. Originally classified SECRET, since declassified). p. 5
49. Ibid., p. 2
50. Ibid., p. 23
51. Ibid., p. 17
52. Ibid., p. 3
53. Ibid., section 1
54. Clausewitz, Carl von, op. cit., p. 566
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